Scholarships to OBC Students in Kerala

1153. SHRI A. VIJAYA RAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received any proposal from Kerala regarding pre-matric and post-matric scholarships for OBC students;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI): (a) to (c) A proposal for releasing fund under the Scheme of Post-matric Scholarships for students belonging to Other Backward Clss (OBCs) has been received from the Government of Kerala during 1999-2000. The State Government has been requested to send relevant details in support of the proposal which is still awaited. No proposal regarding Pre-matric Scholarships for OBC students have been received form Kerala so far.

Target for Steel Production

1154. SHRI ANANTA SETHI: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) the target fixed and achievement made in steel production during Eighth Plan period;

(b) whether the production of steel declined during the Eigth Plan period;

(c) if so, the reasons for decline in the production of steel;

(d) whether Government propose to increase the production in Ninth Plan;

(e) if so, the target set therefor; and

(f) the efforts proposed to be made to achieve, the higher target?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI DILIP RAY), (a) The actual crude steel production in 199495, the terminal year for original VIII Five Year Plan was 19.77 million tonnes as against the estimated production of 24.92 million tonnes assessed by the Working Group on Iron and Steel for the VIII Five Year Plan set up by Planning Commission.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise in view of (b) above.

(d) to (f) As per the projections made by the Working Group on Iron and Steel for the IX Five year Plan set up by Planning Commission the production of finished steel will reach 38.01 million tonnes by 2001.02, the terminal year of IX Five Year Plan. To help the industry achieve the above target, Government has taken several steps to boost the demand for steel which inter-alia include:—

— Orienting product-mix to suit the market requirements and adjusting production in tune with change in the market demand.

— Developing and nourishing long term customers relationship by entering into MOUs/supply arrangement with the customers.

— A "Steel Exporters Forum' has been set up to help steel exporters to overcome bottlenecks in exports.

— To boost the demand and consumption of steel, the Development Commissioner for Iron and Steel (DCI&S) has launched a national campaign for increasing the demand for steel, especially in non-traditional sectors such as rural and agro based industrial sector.

— Rationalisation of Duty" Entitlement Pass Book (DEPB) rates for steel exports have been carried out to boost exports.

— An empowered Committee has been set up to examine & assist specific Research & Development Projects to improve technology for Steel making & enhance quality of Indian Steel.

Package for Restructuring of SAIL

1155. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have approved a package for Rs. 8454 crore for restructuring of ailing Steel Authority of India Limited;

(b) whether Government have waived Rs. 5,703 crore loan from the Steel Development Fund and another Rs. 381 crore borrowed from Centre;

(c) whether government will extend guarantees to enable SAIL to borrow from market Rs. 1,500 crore and another Rs. 1,500 crore to repay burden of its debt daring 1999-2000;

(d) whether SAIL has also been allowed to start soon disinvesting its shares in certain plants;